



Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center



*"Fostering interagency excellence in wilderness stewardship."*

## **A Unified National Strategic Plan for Wilderness Education**

**Framework for Development, April 99**

### **Current Situation:**

National research and regional polls show that a broad spectrum of Americans value their wildlands. However, recent activities in Congress suggest that while public support for the values of wilderness is broad, it is also shallow, and that while opposition may be narrow, it is deep. In the last Congress, seven legislative proposals and numerous committee hearings challenged wilderness management programs and threatened the integrity of the National Wilderness Preservation System. There were no representatives from the public at the table defending wilderness nor are there currently wilderness champions in key Congressional positions.

By 2005, more than half of the America's population will be of Hispanic, African American and Asian descent (US Census Bureau). If the changing population is unaware of or indifferent to the values of wilderness, public support for protecting and maintaining wilderness will be diminished.

A 1996 survey of wilderness managers in the Bureau of Land Management, Fish & Wildlife Service, Forest Service and National Park Service concluded that wilderness awareness, an appreciation of wilderness values and a wilderness use ethic is missing in large segments of our society. The general public was identified as the number one external audience which would benefit most from wilderness education efforts focusing on wilderness values. Internally, each of the agencies acknowledged the need for employee awareness, understanding and appreciation of wilderness.

A number of effective local and regional wilderness education and training efforts have been implemented by each of the wilderness managing agencies. However, these efforts are limited in scope and are severely constrained by lack of funding and staffing. Non-government organizations having an interest in wilderness have focused their efforts largely on campaigns designed to add acreage to the System rather than on maintaining public support for existing areas. Currently, there is no national, unified strategic plan for wilderness education.

### **Need:**

If there is to be a National Wilderness Preservation System at the end of the next century, support for wilderness preservation must deepen. It must deepen among the managers of the four agencies entrusted with the stewardship of our wildernesses, and among the citizens of this country – whose will is carried out by the elected officials who hold so much sway over these protected lands. Wilderness visitors already have deep appreciation of the places that they love, but the support of visitors will not be enough. Support from a wide array of Americans is essential. That support is best engendered through increasing the awareness that we all benefit from wildernesses whether or not we visit them. Generating that support is an inseparable part of our mission as wilderness stewards, for we cannot properly take care of these special places without long-term commitment from the American people to do so.

Singlehandedly, neither wilderness managing agencies nor non-government organizations have the resources to generate the level of public support needed to preserve wilderness. Collectively, however, we can pool our limited resources, capitalize on each other's strengths and focus our efforts on developing and implementing a unified wilderness education strategic plan that will ensure an enduring resource of wilderness for present and future generations. It is time to build a coalition for wilderness that crosses agency, organization and user and non-user boundaries to gain broad and deep support for maintaining the National Wilderness Preservation System. It is time to develop, implement and evaluate a national, unified strategic plan for wilderness education.

### **Strategic Plan Purpose:**

Promote and enhance the preservation of wilderness for present and future generations by increasing awareness, understanding, appreciation and support of the National Wilderness Preservation System among the American people.

## Appendix A - A UNIFIED NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN for WILDERNESS EDUCATION

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#### Goals:

Increase awareness, understanding, appreciation and support of Wilderness in:

- America's schoolchildren
- Adult populations from diverse cultural, geographic and social backgrounds
- Mass media
- Congress
- Wilderness visitors

#### Objectives:

Objectives must be developed for each of the goals listed above. Objectives must specify:

- *results* to be achieved
- *specific criteria* to measure degree to which results are achieved
- *time frame* for achieving results
- *target group*

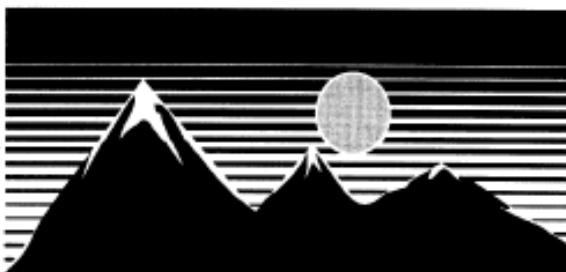
Examples:

- The number of city residents participating in curbside recycling will increase from 200 to 600 by September 30, 2000.
- 75% of all 7th grade students in the Custer County School System will show improvement in math skills by scoring at least 80% on the Smith-Jones Test of Math Competency by the end of academic year 1999-2000.

(From: Successful Grantseeking: A Comprehensive Guide to Developing Proposals, Finding Funders, and Managing the Grantseeking Process by Barbara Bader and Steven Carr)

#### Actions:

Actions to meet each of the identified goals must be identified and prioritized. It is important that both current and proposed efforts are identified to prevent duplication of effort.



#### Operational Plans:

Operational Plans must be developed for each action to clarify:

- Action
- Location
- Primary message
- Contribution to unit specific management goals
- Audience
- Initiation date
- Goals and objectives of the action
- Providers
- Logistics
- Staff Time
- Funding
- Duration
- Method of evaluation

#### Support:

We must gain support for a unified approach both internally and externally from many levels, including, but certainly not limited to:

- |                          |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Field                  | • Outward Bound       |
| • Line Officers          | • NOLS                |
| • Agency Directors       | • SCA                 |
| • Department             | • ORCA                |
| • The Wilderness Society | • NAAE                |
| • Wilderness Watch       | • NAI                 |
| • Wilderness Inquiry     | • NPCA                |
| • Prof Guide Institute   | • Soc of Am Foresters |
| • America Outdoors       | • NAAFWA              |

#### Conclusion:

If we do not embrace the challenge of increasing awareness, understanding, appreciation and support of the National Wilderness Preservation System among the American people, the System, as we know it, will not survive into the next century. It will erode away like sand before the rising tide. Let it not be said that the wilderness legacy we pass to the next generation is but a remnant of that passed to us by Carhart, Leopold and Marshall. Rather, may the record show that, by leadership and example, we reached across agency, organization and user and non-user boundaries; we drew from each others' strengths; we built a coalition to develop, implement and evaluate a national, unified strategic plan for wilderness education; we inspired a collaborative effort to ensure an enduring resource of wilderness for present and future generations.